

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 IO-13 HA-05 DOE-15 SOE-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6872

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 4066

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PINT, SHUM, PK, SA

SUBJECT: GENERAL ZIA'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA PROVOKES EFFUSIVE
PAKISTANI PRESS PLAY

REF: (A) JIDDA 2928 (NOTAL)

1. WE ASSUME EMBASSY JIDDA WILL BE REPORTING ON THE VISIT TO
JIDDA ON 16-19 APRIL OF CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR (CMLA)
GENERAL ZIA UL-HAQ OF PAKISTAN. WE ARE ALSO ATTEMPTING TO SORT
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OUT WITH BOTH THE MFA AND THE SAUDI EMBASSY HERE THEIR
IMPRESSIONS OF HOW THE VISIT WENT AND WHAT WAS ACTUALLY
ACCOMPLISHED.

2. RUMORS ARE, OF COURSE, RAMPANT, ENCOURAGED BY THE EXUBERANT IF
NOT EXULTANT TONE OF PAKISTAN PRESS ACCOUNTS OF THE VISIT SINCE
THE GENERAL RETURNED TO PAKISTAN. THEY RANGE FROM THE ALREADY

REPORTED PRIVATE ASSURANCE TO KING KHALID BY ZIA ON BHUTTO'S EVENTUAL FATE (REFTEL) -- THUS ACCOUNTING FOR THE APPARENTLY EFFUSIVE TREATMENT THE CMLA RECEIVED IN JIDDA -- TO AN EXPLANATION THAT THE SAUDIS HAVE CHOSEN -- BY EMBRACING ZIA SO WARMLY -- TO BUTTRESS HIS POSITION AS BEST THEY CAN, TURNING THEIR BACKS ON BHUTTO AS A LOST CAUSE. VARIOUS VIEWS (MOST OF THEM SPECULATIVE) ABOUND BETWEEN THESE TWO EXTREMES, AND THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GENERAL HAS SPOKEN OUT OF BOTH SIDES OF HIS MOUTH IN JIDDA AND RAWALPINDI.

3. HOWEVER, THE IMPRESSION HERE IS THAT THE VISIT WAS A TRIUMPHANT SUCCESS FOR THE CMLA, WHO WAS CLEARLY BUOYED BY THE TREATMENT THE SAUDIS ACCORDED HIM. HE DECLARED IN A PRESS CONFERENCE ON HIS RETURN (19 APRIL) THAT THE TRIP HAD LEFT HIM "REJUVENATED IN MIND AND SPIRIT". HIS LEGAL AND DELIGIOUS AFFAIRS ADVISOR, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER A.K. BROHI, WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM ON THE TRIP, SPOKE TO THE PRESS IN A SIMILAR VEIN ON 24 APRIL WHEN HE TOLD PAKISTAN TV THAT THE VISIT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED "A SUCCESS BY ANY STANDARD". BROHI QUOTED CROWN PRINCE FAHD'S REPORTED STATEMENT, DESCRIBED AS "VERY REMARKABLE", THAT THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT IS SURE THAT AS LONG AS GENERAL ZIA UL-HAQ IS HANDLING THE AFFAIRS OF PAKISTAN WITH HIS CAPABLE COLLEAGUES, STABILITY AND ORDER WILL RULE IN PAKISTAN." PAKISTANIS HAVE LITTLE REASON TO DOUBT BROHI WHEN HE CHARACTERIZED THIS AS A HEARTFELT "TRIBUTE... TO PAKISTAN", REFLECTING SAUDI ENDORSEMENT OF THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION AND OF ITS LEADER.
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4. PRESS ACCOUNTS IN PAKISTAN HAVE, HOWEVER, BEEN SHORT ON FACTS ABOUT THE VISIT. THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION OF SAUDI MONEY/ASSISTANCE, FOR INSTANCE. NOR HAS THERE BEEN ANY DETAIL ON WHAT MIGHT HAVE TRANSPIRED REGARDING THE BHUTTO APPEAL AND THE PROSPECT OF CLEMENCY. ASKED DIRECTLY AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE 19TH IF HE HAD DISCUSSED THE FATE OF BHUTTO WHILE IN JIDDA, GEN. ZIA SIMPLY CHARACTERIZED THE BHUTTO SITUATION AS "TOO MINOR A PROBLEM" TO HAVE BEEN BROACHED WITH HIS SAUDI HOSTS.

5. COMMENT: WE FIND THIS LAST, INTER ALIA, MORE THAN A LITTLE DISINGENUOUS AND HOPE TO HAVE MORE TO SAY ON THIS SUBJECT AND ON THE VISIT AS A WHOLE.
HUMMEL

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